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Convention center expansion would cost $225 million

Agency that operates it unable to borrow amount

Tom Daykin Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

Downtown Milwaukee's Wisconsin Center would cost $225 million to $275 million to expand, according to a new estimate — outstripping the $200 million the agency that operates the convention center is able to borrow.

So officials will look at what they can buy for that lower amount, and whether that less-costly proposal makes sense.

The possible expansion was discussed at Friday's board meeting of the Wisconsin Center District.

The state-created district operates the convention center, the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena and the Miller High Life Theater. Its operations are financed in part with taxes on Milwaukee County hotel rooms, restaurant tabs and car rentals.

In September, a consultant hired by the center district said the facility should add around 155,000 square feet to 215,000 square feet, with a bigger exhibit hall and ballroom and more meeting rooms. The center's current exhibit space, banquet hall and meeting rooms total 265,835 square feet.

That expansion, which would likely go north of the Wisconsin Center on its parking lot along W. Kilbourn Ave., would cost $225 million to $275 million, according to Friday's presentation by the consultant, Susan Sieger, president of Tampa, Fla.-based Crossroads Consulting Services LLC.

The expanded facility would draw

See EXPANSION, Page 4A

Chronic pollutants still plague rivers

Samples show road salt, phosphorus, bacteria

Lee Bergquist Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

The Milwaukee River attracts more enthusiasts today than it has in decades as an ever-increasing number of people live, work and play along the state's most urban river system.

But the latest results of water sampling show the Milwaukee River and its companions, the Menomonee and Kinnickinnic, continue to struggle with chronic problems — notably, pollutants such as phosphorus, sediments, bacteria and road salt.

The grade for 2016 for the entire basin: "D-plus."

That's the lowest mark given by Milwaukee Riverkeeper since 2011.

"It's a wake-up call that there is a lot more work to do," said Cheryl Nenn, who heads up water management programs for the environmental group.

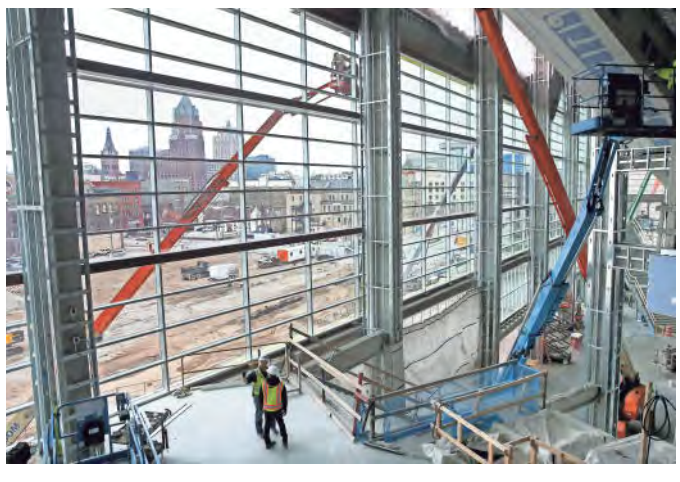
The group's annual report card re-

See RIVER, Page 5A

AGONY AND ECSTASY

Waunakee's Javian Dayne, photo above, scores a touchdown despite the efforts of Brookfield Central's Connor Kolb (left) and Reggie Jennings during the WIAA Division 2 state football championship game Friday at Camp Randall Stadium in Madison. Waunakee beat Brookfield Central, 14-13. Kimberly's Aaron Stannard lifts up Garrett Thomaschefsky, left photo, after the Papermakers' 27-7 win over Sun Prairie in the WIAA Division 1 state championship game. It was Kimberly's fifth straight title and 70th straight victory, the longest streak in the nation.

MARK HOFFMAN/ MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL AND DANNY DAMIANI/ USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN



The view looking out the east windows of the atrium from the suite level of the new Bucks arena. See more photos at jsonline.com. MICHAEL SEARS/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

Starting to feel — and smell — like an arena

James B. Nelson Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

You don't need a coat to survive a walk through the new Milwaukee Bucks arena. And you don't need much imagination to see what it's going to feel like on an event day.

For the most part, the Bucks' new $524 million home is buttoned up and teeming with more than 800 construction workers. It's fairly warm inside now that it's been all-but-sealed from the elements.

Work is about 68% complete, said Jesse Kemp, senior project manager for Mortenson Construction, during a

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New arena a key to draw people downtown, **3A**

See ARENA, Page 4A

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